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JOHN CROW

A NOVEL

FOUNDED ON FACTS

BY

JOHN W. RYDER.

The Experience of One with whose Life the
Author is Intimately Acquainted.

YORK, PA.:
P. ANSTADT & SONS,
1900.



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CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND SCHOOL BOY.

“There is a nigger baby at our house,” was the language of a small boy as he spoke to Sam Slick. The curiosity of the neighbors was aroused. They came to see for themselves. The parents had to explain. The new little John Crow was only a shade darker than the other five children of the family. But his nurse had succeeded in making his older brother Joe believe that John was a nigger. And yet why should it be thought such a terrible disgrace to have a dark skin? Is it not because

the Negroes have been held in slavery and ignorance? As they rise in the scale of intelligence and Christian character they will be considered more beautiful. It was so with Mrs. Stowe's Uncle Tom. There is a very close connection between the true, the beautiful, and the good. We believe that heaven is full of people of wondrous beauty.

When John Crow was born the laws of health were not known to any great extent. His parents in their youth had a very limited chance of gaining an education. His mother had gone to school only three months. It was work, work, work, from morning till night. The eating of large

quantities of fat pork was thought essential for keeping up strength to work. But the result for little John Crow was a terrible affliction of boils. From the crown of his head to the soles of his feet he was covered with boils. The milk he imbibed from his mother filled his body with impure blood. But with all his boils, he seemed to be a closer relation to Job than to his own mother. His terrific screams made his nurse believe his body was pierced with a thousand needles. Every stitch of clothing would be taken from him and still the yells continued. No wonder Job wrote, "My clothes abhor me." But John, like other babies

who have had them, got over his boils.

The hero of our story started to school when he was only five years old. It was with a great deal of pompous pride that he let his teacher know he could say his A B C's. And best of all he could say them just as well off the book as on the book. Now and then his teacher would give him a slice of apple to encourage his industry and keep him from playing tricks. He pitied the other boys who didn't get any, but the slice was too small to divide. It seemed as if he could hardly keep his eyes from bulging out with delight.

There come times in school, when an irresistible impulse takes full pos-

session of the scholars to play tricks. From the start, John was an expert at the trick business. His little body was so chock-full of life that he just couldn't keep from throwing paper balls at the girls. As these missives would fly from his nimble fingers it would now and then result in a scream from the one who was hit. And although the teacher's back was turned, she would at once put the blame upon John. She tried to console him by telling him she had an eye in the back of her head. John was sure she lied about it, but took his whipping like a little man.

There was no study at school in which John Crow found any greater

pleasure than in declaiming. He sent the orator's thrill through his audience in his first declamation, the words of which were these:

"You would scarce expect one of my age,
To speak in public on the stage.
But if I chance to fall below
Demosthenes or Cicero,
Don't view me with a critic's eye,
But pass my imperfections by."

Thousands of boys have been started in their oratorical career with these lines. Scattered all over this country in the little red school houses we find the embryo Clays and Websters. As they speak their pieces with great fear and trembling, they need thorough instruction and strong

encouragement. The benefit to mind and soul, of such a drill, cannot be told in words. Another declamation with which little John Crow strove to make himself famous, was one beginning with these words :

“The boy stood on the burning deck,
Whence all but him had fled.
The flame that lit the battle’s wreck,
Shone round him o’er the dead.”

Many a school boy has felt a thrill of awe run through his soul as he listened to this patriotic poem. This noble boy would rather perish than disobey his father. Who can tell how much this poem had to do in forming the conscience and character of John

Crow ? It must be said to his credit that in selecting declamations, he made it a rule to choose those that were of an elevating character. As the years go by, often the occasion comes up when good can be done by quoting what had been memorized in the days of boyhood. The hero of this story was right, when he said : "The school teachers who gave the proper encouragement to declaiming, deserved about twice as much pay as those who took no interest in it at all."

CHAPTER II.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING.

In giving a faithful record of the early years of John Crow, we dare not overlook his religious training. The piety of his father was of a very quiet kind. It was his custom as the family gathered around the table at each meal to require all to fold their hands whilst he would offer a silent prayer. With his eyes closed and his lips moving, the look on his face was enough to convince any one that he was sincere. When he read his Bible a holy awe seemed to settle

upon him. For his family, he provided a large religious weekly paper of the pietistic type. But it is in John Crow's mother that we find the practical piety which made the deepest impression on his mind. It was her custom to teach her children to pray almost as soon as they could talk. Evening after evening would she persuade her little ones to say this prayer :

“ Now I lay me down to sleep.

I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

If I should die before I wake,

I pray the Lord my soul to take.

And this I ask for Jesus sake.”

Does a child ever forget that prayer?
Old men tell it with pride that they

were taught it at mother's knee. As the years go by, it is sweet to close the eyes in slumber with those words soothing the tired body to sleep. At an early age John Crow was sent to Sunday school. In the summer time he would trudge barefooted for three miles through the hot sun to be in his class in the little town of Vandalia. What a lesson to the boys of this day who find the work too hard even to ride in an easy carriage a shorter distance over good roads. Forty years ago there was more enthusiasm for Sunday schools than there is to-day. John Crow's teacher was an aged Christian man. One day he said to the class : " I want you all during

the week, to find an answer in the Bible to this question : ‘ What is the whole duty of man?’ ” John was not familiar with the use of the Concordance, and although he hunted earnestly, yet the week passed by, with no answer for his teacher’s question. The next Sunday the entire class reported, “ No answer found. ” Then the faithful teacher requested them to read in concert, Ecclesiastes, xii 13, “ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter ; fear God and keep His Commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ”

On his way to Sunday school John Crow passed a persimmon tree. The luscious fruit was a terrible tempta-

tion to the boy. After the frost had made those persimmons mellow and mushy, John had to almost shut his eyes as he passed that tree. Many a boy has met his Waterloo as he fought a ravenous appetite for persimmons and watermelons. No wonder that a little fellow put this question to his Sunday school teacher, "What kind of a little boy was *you* when *you* was little?" A watermelon patch in the center of a village is almost too much for a boy's honest appetite. Out of the depths there comes a fearful struggle for honesty. As John's father would chase the boys out of his watermelon patch, the boy would say to himself: "What are those

melons for anyhow, if not for to eat ? ”

Then there was the sugar camp, with all its temptations to make the molasses into taffy. John Crow's appetite for taffy was something really marvelous. But the boy thought to himself, “ Well, what is the difference whether I eat the sweetness in the form of sugar, molasses or taffy ? ” Many and many a bucketful of sugar water did John carry into camp to be boiled into molasses. Sometimes he would trudge half a mile with two large buckets full into camp. Improved methods of gathering the sap have taken the place of the old slavish way of carrying it. But those immense sugar camps of forty years ago, in

the Miami Valley, have nearly all passed away. I wish I could find language to describe their marvelous beauty and usefulness. The sugar tree is the most handsome fellow of the forest. Look at him as he stands there a model of symmetry in shape. He is the first child of the forest to push forth his leaves of rich green. The early spring birds choose him as a special favorite in which to sing their songs of gladness. We listen to God's orchestra of the forest, nature's temple for the birds. Oh how I wish I could turn back the tide of time for forty years and picture to you a thrifty sugar camp as it was then on almost every farm in the

Miami Valley. The boys and girls of that day made the woods ring with their shouts of revelry and rollicking fun. As they would slap the taffy on each others' faces it seemed as if the very heart would jump into the mouth with the scream that was uttered. Then, too, the hen roosts had to suffer fearfully. And yet with all John Crow's love of mischief, I don't remember that he ever brought a chicken or rooster into camp after night. But it may be that he was willing to pick the feathers off, after the others had stolen the poultry. At such jolly jubilees John would keep the crowd in a continual roar. Sometimes they would yell, "neech,

speech, speech," until he would favor them with a declamation. He had one that would always make the woods ring with cheers. It was "Hans Breitman's Party." The first lines of this declamation were as follows :

"Hans Breitman gafe von party,
I vent dare I'll pe bound.
Und I danced mit Matilda Visecup,
Und vent sphinnin' round and round."

But it was the last lines that generally brought the screams of laughter. These were the words :

"Vare ish dot party now ?
All gonod away, mit de lager peer,
Away in de eveighkeit."

As John Crow could not talk anything else but the Pennsylvania Dutch

the first few years of his life, this Dutch poem suited him to perfection. Sometimes at these sugar camp jollifications, he would speak "Spartacus to the Gladiators." But it was at the "School Exhibitions," that John always strove to make himself famous. When volunteer declaimers were called for, he would always be the first one to respond, for he always held a declamation at the end of his tongue. Then, too, he would often take a part in dialogues. He had one in which he was the small boy, begging for his mother to give him a piece of cake. The whining, and twisting of face, and getting down on his knees, before he got that piece of cake, would always bring the house down, as he was eating the cake.

CHAPTER III.

HE BEGINS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

When a human being begins the Christian life, the very angels shout for joy. With John Crow, it was the most important event in his history. In his early boyhood, deep religious impressions were made by the life and words of his pious mother. Also the sermons of Rev. A. S. Link took hold of his very soul. Under the preaching of this man, John felt the burden of sin resting on him like a mighty mountain. One peculiarity of his case was, he felt sure he should die before a year would pass away.

I cannot find words to describe the deep struggle of that year. The devil made John believe he ought to keep his dreadful distress of soul all to himself. Day after day dragged along with doleful despair. Night after night would bring dreams of death. It seemed to him as if the very heavens were brass above him. The most terrible torment would come to him when he would dream that he was sinking into hell. As his soul would touch the unquenchable fire, he would suddenly awake, and find great drops of sweat standing on his forehead. Then would he exclaim with gladness, "Thank God, this is only a dream."

But there came a day when such dreams were forever ended. It was a day of marvelous gladness. It was a day when the very heavens and the earth were filled with the sweetest and brightest sunshine. It is doubtful whether anyone ever had more convincing evidence of his conversion than the boy, John Crow. Suddenly there came a flood of spiritual joy that was overwhelming. It was summer time, and a halo of glory seemed to rest on every green tree. Over and over again John would sing:

“Oh how happy are they,
Who their Savior obey,
And have laid up their treasures above,
Tongue cannot express

The sweet comfort and peace,
Of a soul in its earliest love.
That sweet comfort was mine
When the favor divine
I first found in the blood of the Lamb.
And I could not believe
That I ever should grieve
That I ever should suffer again.
In a chariot of fire,
I rose higher and higher,
All sin and temptation below."

John Crow began his Christian life with a soul flooded with happiness. The words that expressed his feelings most fully were : " Rejoice, rejoice, again I say unto you, rejoice ! " The strongest argument in favor of the Christian religion is the supreme happiness which it brings. Was it

not so when the 3000 converts of the Day of Pentecost went from house to house eating their meat in gladness, praising God and having favor with all the people? What right has anyone who calls himself a Christian to go up and down this beautiful earth with a face indicating that he had swallowed a tombstone? It is much easier to win souls for the kingdom of God with a smile than with a growl. Oh, I wish that this gospel of gladness would take full possession of all the people.

In the life of John Crow conversion meant a wonderful change from sadness to gladness. A common remark was: "What a happy boy

John has become here of late !” But the Christian life means work as well as joy. It means the persuading of others to press into God’s kingdom. It means that we shall fill our crown with many stars, each one of which represents a soul brought to Christ. So we find John Crow, the Christian, taking a public part in prayer. We find him talking to his companions about the great things of God, and of the soul, and of eternity. He would publicly exhort sinners to flee at once from sin, and place their feet upon the rock foundation of Christianity. He began using his voice as God intended it should be used. That voice was naturally one

of great power. A classmate said to him one day, "I would give almost anything in the world if I had as good a voice as you have." But back of a good voice there must be a soul filled with a burning ambition for God's glory.

CHAPTER IV.

JOHN GOES TO WITTENBERG COLLEGE.

It is a great day in a boy's life when he leaves the old home and starts to college. It was especially so with John Crow. He had never been away from home more than a few days at a time. His reason for going to college was a desire to qualify himself for the Christian ministry. He had strong and deep convictions that God wanted to use him to extend His kingdom in this way. And his convictions were just as strong that a man had no business to enter

the ministry without a thorough education. He took God's word as his guide in its teaching on this subject. He realized that if a man entered the ministry without an education, he did so at the peril of being destroyed. Does not God tell us in Hosea, iv. 6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge ; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will reject thee, and thou shalt no longer be a priest unto me." Also Paul tells the minister to study, so that he can be a workman who does not need to be ashamed ; study, so that he can rightly divide the word of truth. The work of winning souls for Christ is one of such stupendous importance

that it requires an educated man, who, like Paul, is able to be all things to all men in order that he may be successful. Shortly after John Crow reached Wittenberg College he joined the Excelsior Literary Society. In this society he found a field of immense enjoyment. Half a day of each week was occupied in the exercises of this society. Then on extra occasions John was generally called on to give one of his humorous declamations. He had one which he called the "Bunkumbe Speech," that always made his audiences roar. I will quote a few sentences of it.

"MR. PRESIDENT, There seems to be a disposition here to fight. Now,

if there is any fighting to be done, come on with your corn cobs and lightning bugs. The fact is, we have had a little bit of black jack buncombe, a little bit of two bit buncombe, and the old scratch and his imps only know what other kinds of buncombe we have had. Why, sir, Mr. President, if you only give these gentlemen a little Southern soap, and a little Northern water, they will make enough buncombe lather to wash the people of the United States. I appeal to the eagle of my country. 'Oh, thou proud bird of freedom, if they chase you from the snowy hemlock of the North down to the sunny palmetto of the South, come over to

the gum tree of the West, and we will protect your proud birdship as long as grass runs and water grows.' ”

The comical expression that would come over John's face as he would deliver this harangue told more than the words. Then he would sometimes recite a eulogy on Tom Marshall, the orator, that for its thrilling eloquence brought peal upon peal of applause. In describing Marshall, he said : “ He had eloquence of the loftiest and the noblest ; he had pathos of the deepest and the sweetest, he had sarcasm of the keenest and the severest, he had wit of the purest and the brightest. But Tom Marshall was the slave of strong drink. He

drank to drown sorrow, and at last drank enough to drown himself. When he was under the influence of liquor, at times he would soar like an eagle, then again he would flounder in the puddle. The biographers of Oliver Goldsmith wrote, 'Alas, poor Goldsmith.' So those who in after years will stand by the grave of Marshall will write: 'Alas, poor Marshall.'"

John Crow was a born foe to the liquor traffic. It was during his college course that the women started their crusade of prayer against the liquor traffic. At Springfield, Ohio, where John was now attending college, the "Crusade against the Black

Bottle," was raging with the most intense fierceness. This was the home of Mother Stewart, the great leader in that fierce war. As her clear voice in clarion tones sounded the thrilling battle cry, the hosts of temperance gathered at her call. Through the slush and snow they waded into the saloons. With prayer and song, and pathetic appeal they closed six hundred of those holes of hell in Ohio in one year. It was a glorious work for God. As they knelt in those filthy saloons, their very knee prints were considered sacred by Christian people, and the angels of God. I firmly believe if the Christian women of the world

would pursue the same course for five years in succession, they could close every saloon on the earth. John Crow took an active part in the crusade of prayer for the utter annihilation of the saloon. He worked to the utmost of his strength that all the distilleries and breweries and saloons and all the drinks which intoxicate might be destroyed. I will close this chapter by giving a poem describing the ruin wrought by the rum fiend. It is the plea of a woman whose husband had died that most dreadful of deaths, a drunkard's death. She comes to a lawyer to persuade him to sue the saloon keeper who had

sold the liquor to her husband. She
says :

“ Now lawyer, you’ll have to be patient with
me,

For I never went to law before,
And it makes me nervous you see,
And it does not seem in a woman’s place,
And many a time I’ve said
That nothing would ever take me to law,
I’d suffer wrong instead.

Not for myself do I come here now,
I could suffer on alone ;
But I come for my fatherless children,
Helpless and starving at home.

Starving because their father,
For liquor sold his life ;
Thank God for the Adair liquor law,
The friend of the drunkard’s wife.

Little by little the demon crept

Into this home of ours.

Oh, Sir, on your knees thank God,

If you have never felt its powers.

If you have never been drawn

As if by a fatal spell,

Until day after day,

And night after night,

Were spent in a drinking hell.

I cannot tell my anguish,

As those days and nights pass by,

But I know it is the hardest part of life,

To see one's husband die.

But Oh, to see him die a drunkard's death,

All other deaths seem light.

I wish a few of our saloon keepers

Could have stood by him that night.

These terrible last few years

Seem just like a dream to me,

And I sometimes think I'll wake

And find my home as it used to be ;

My husband happy and loving,

My children merry and bright.

And now, Oh, what is the use of law

If our wrongs it does not right.

Men in the best of society,

Who blocks of property own,

Who once had hearts of flesh,

Which rum has turned to stone.

Men who own their pews in church,

Perhaps if they could be

At one of the death's they help to make,

Their eyes would open and see.

Men who roll in money

From the rents which they receive

Taken from starving families.

Oh, Sir, I verily believe,

That God in His righteous judgment,

Hating oppression and wrong,
Will one of these days release us,
Release us from this bondage borne so
long.

And today 'n the name of my children,
Who are starving, I come to you,
That you may sue for the money
That to them is justly due.

I come in the name of a ruined home,
Which money can ne'er restore.
I come in a murdered husband's name ;
Oh, what can I say more.

I come in the name of a righteous God,
From whom there is no appeal.

I come in the name of a broken heart,
Which money can never heal.

In the name of all that was dear in life,
Bitter though I may be,
Sue these saloon keepers
For the thousands they owe me.

I know that some of our rich men,
Think this law is wrong,
And are trying to have it modified,
And plenty will help them along.
What to them is a drunkard's life ?
If his money has helped to pay the rents.
Which they and their families spend in
pleasure every day.
Now, lawyer, I've told you my story,
Please do the best you can to win;
And I'll pay you all the same,
Even if you lose, after doing your best
to win,
In my little children's name. "

This poem ought to be spoken by
good declaimers in every school
house and church on the earth. It
ought to be spoken in every college
and literary society by the best
speakers. It ought to be memorized
by every reader of John Crow.

CHAPTER V.

JOHN, AS A CHRISTIAN WORKER.

The religion of John Crow was of the pietistic type. He had strong faith in a live prayer-meeting. His conversion had been largely brought about by hearing fervent prayers. Many a time, as he would listen to the heart-melting prayers of his Christian mother, his tears would roll down his cheeks like big drops of rain. After he had given his heart to God, he made it a rule to take an active part in prayer-meetings. It always worried him to see time go to waste in such a meeting. In the

community where he spent the greater part of his life until he was nearly thirty years old, it was the custom of the Christian people to meet at each other's houses for prayer.

For many years, on Thursday evening of each week, this prayer-meeting was well attended.

It was a common occurrence for people to be converted in this meeting. I very much fear that during the weeks that I have been writing this story there have been no conversions at this weekly prayer-meeting. In fact I have been told that for several years past the spiritual enthusiasm had run down so low,

that the week-day prayer-meeting has been abandoned. But when John Crow's spiritual life began, the revival system prevailed so extensively in nearly all of the churches of the Miami Valley, that it was a very easy matter to keep up a prayer-meeting. As a young Christian, John took an active part in revival meetings. It was in one of these meetings that his sister Emma, then only twelve years old, was converted. It was a remarkable conversion. The principal means that God used to bring this girl into the Christian life was a severe siege of typhoid fever. Realizing that she was unprepared to go through the

gates of death, she sent for her brother David, who was at college studying for the ministry, to come and pray with her. The doctor said she would die. But John had more faith in prayer than in medicine. The two brothers prevailed in prayer with God until He spared the life of their sister. David prayed by her bedside. John plead with the Almighty One in secret until she was taken out of the very jaws of death. Shortly after this, David wrote a letter to her from college, in which he said, "Emma, as God has been so good to you in sparing your life, don't you think you ought to be a Christian?" That was the dart

which the Holy Spirit used for sending conviction into the girl's heart until smiles took the place of sorrow, and tears were exchanged for joy.

During a revival meeting conducted by Revs. Link and Sinsbaugh, she made a public profession. One evening she came to the altar of prayer, where there was very earnest pleading that God would speedily send the joy of salvation. When she returned home, she said, "John, I feel that I am a sinner. Won't you pray for me?" The old family Bible was lying on the table. John turned to the fifty-first Psalm and read, "Create within me a new heart, Oh God, and renew a right

spirit within me. Take not thy Holy Spirit from me ; then will I teach transgressors Thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto Thee."

The next evening, shortly after she came to the altar, she said to her pastor, "I feel so happy, won't you let me sing a song ?" Then with a voice full of the deepest, sweetest pathos she sang these words :

"I want to be an angel,
And with the angels stand,
A crown upon my forehead,
A harp within my hand.
There right before my Savior,
So glorious and so bright,
I'd make the sweetest music,
And praise him day and night.
I know I am weak and sinful,

But Jesus will forgive;
For many little children
Have gone to Heaven to live.
Dear Savior, when I languish,
And lay me down to die,
Oh send a shining angel,
To bear me to the sky."

During the singing of this touching song it seemed as if each one of that immense audience realized the presence of the Heavenly host, as did the shepherds when they were listening to the singing of these words, "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; peace upon earth, good will among men."

During this revival, John's brother Jacob and a great many others pressed into the kingdom of God

CHAPTER VI.

JOHN'S FRIENDS, FRANK AND QUINCY.

Sometimes there springs up between neighbors' boys an intimate friendship that is as true as solid steel. Yea, like links of shining gold do we find the ties that bind together Frank Willis and John Crow and Quincy Conover. Within a circle of less than a mile in diameter were the homes of the three. They belonged to the same school district. Quincy and John were especially fond of playing tricks on each other, and on the other scholars. One day

John, and in fact the whole school, was boiling over with fun. Suddenly John dipped his pen into a bottle full of ink. Quincy, who was in the seat in front of him, was deeply absorbed in the study of a puzzling problem. Like a clap of thunder from a clear sky, came a loud Indian yell of "a-u-c-h," from Quincy; John had held his pen full of ink close to the ear of his friend, and with a nudge got him to look around. But instead of daubing the ink over Quincy's face, the pen stuck fast in his nose. Although there was a roaring laugh from the whole school, it proved a serious affair for John. He had to take the

inevitable whipping. The trick was too self-evident for him to put it on any other boy. To this day he is sorry that he imposed on his friend, and sorry also that he had to take the whipping.

In the different studies at school there was a strong rivalry between John Crow and Quincy Conover and Frank Willis. Frank was the best declaimer, Quincy was the best mathematician, and John was the best speller.

In a book called, "The Hoosier School Master," there is a character called Jeems Philips. He was the champion speller of Indiana. Although John could not claim to be

the champion speller of the great State of Ohio, yet in his best days he had few superiors in the Miami Valley. Even to this day he gets righteously angry when he sees a word in print that is wrongly spelled.

But I must tell you more about the good traits of John's friend, Frank Willis. He was a born genius. His natural wit was indeed marvelous. He was the most charming conversationalist I ever met. He could talk intelligently on an immense variety of subjects. In law he was the superior of the majority of those admitted to the bar. In theology not many ministers surpassed him. He was a good his-

torian. He was a grand grammarian. He was a fascinating reader.

The friendship of Frank and John was like unto that of David and Johnathan in Bible times. When the enemies of Frank Willis would shoot their poisonous darts at his heart, John was ever ready to place his body between that heart and those darts. Many and many a kind deed did Frank do for John. Shall not their friendship for each other go on and on forever ?

In the days of their young manhood they would sit side by side in the Sunday-school and church service. In the literary society they would put their heads together and

make plans for the uplifting of the community. In the holding of Oratorical contests, John would announce the names of the declaimers, whilst Frank and Quincy would act as judges

On social questions their minds ran in parallel lines. Many and many a jolly laugh have these three boys had together. For several years John Crow and Quincy Conover were together at Wittenberg College.

Quincy was called, "The wit of Wittenberg." When vacation would come they were faithful callers every Sunday evening on two ladies living in the same village

Judging from results, it seemed as if the entire week had been spent in studying up something funny. Far into the night the social sparks would fly like those from a hickory log heap in the chimney corner.

When Quincy Conover was married, John and his girl stood by him, doing what they could to keep his nerves steady. At the supper table Quincy made the remark, "that on such an occasion, he wouldn't indulge in common food, but would satisfy his appetite with wedding cake." The years have flown swiftly by, and whilst I write, Quincy Conover has a boy of his own grown to manhood attending college.

Frank Willis seems to be a confirmed bachelor. As of old he is full of jolly jokes and sly wit. Recently he went to hear a lecturer who had for his subject, "Two are better than one." As might be expected, all the old bachelors were earnestly advised to get married. At the close of the lecture, two maidens, who were not so very young any more, had the following episode: Said one of them, "Now Frank, you are the oldest of all of us, and it is high time that you follow the advice you have just heard about getting married." The other girl joined in, saying, "Now for once do as the preacher told you to do." "Well, now seri-

ously, girls," said Frank, "as the lecturer declares *two* are better than one, I'll take both of you " Then the girls fled, fearing they had said something they had better left unsaid. And even Frank was not sure whether he had said anything out of the way or not.

At another time Frank Willis was attending a Farmers' Institute. A lady essayist read a most excellent article on "Cruelty to Animals." During the general discussion that followed, Frank said he liked the essay very much, with one exception, viz, the lady had not one word to say against the cruelty to old bachelors. He had the sympathy

of the entire audience until the essayist said, "I didn't want to class you with the other poor, dumb animals." The roar which followed ended all further discussion of the subject.

Quincy Conover led a life of usefulness in his native neighborhood. For over fifty years he has resided within a few rods of the spot where he was born. There comes to us a sweet satisfaction when our own community appreciates the efforts we put forth to do good. The boys with whom Quincy had gone to school would again and again elect him as school director. Several times was he elected by the Town-

ship School Board as its President. In deciding questions of public concern he was prudent and impartial. He took an active interest in educational affairs. He was frequently elected Township Trustee. He was kind to the poor ; and many a hungry man did he make happy. As President of the Farmers' Institute, and also of the Agricultural Fair, he gave extensive advancement to the farmer's interest. He was fond of fine horses and cattle and sheep. It was a great pleasure to him to see his flocks and herds and droves of horses roam over his native hills. He would talk to his horses almost as would to his own children. It

seemed as if he realized a higher degree of intelligence in a fine horse than other people did. He delighted in driving a fast sprinter. It is said he was the owner of a horse that traveled a quarter of a mile at a 2.01 gait.

Many a drive did Quincy Conover and John Crow take together. They were jolly, genial companions. Their flow of wit would bring many a peal of laughter. The difference in their ages was only a few months. Their dispositions were as nearly alike as their ages. As the years go by, their friendship for each other grows stronger and stronger. May eternal companionship be theirs to enjoy.

CHAPTER VII.

JOHN AND THE ORATORS.

One object in the writing of this book is the promotion of genuine eloquence. The art of oratory adds more to the sum of human happiness than all other arts. The most pleasurable sensation that can pass through the human mind is brought about by the proper use of the human voice. From the days of Demosthenes to the days of Henry Clay, the people have paid the highest praise to true eloquence. The swaying of an audience with the tip of the tongue is a most mar-

velous and momentous accomplishment. The millions upon millions of people who have been brought into God's kingdom have been persuaded to start in the Christian life by the right use of the human voice. It is the glory of our land that it is the land of orators. Here free speech has full sway. Almost as soon as the child can talk it is encouraged to declaim. When the mother says to her boy, "Now get up and speak your piece," she is sowing the seed that shall bring forth a harvest which will feed with joy the audiences of the future. As that boy takes an active part in the school exhibitions,

he is preparing his brow to wear the laurels of Webster and Clay, Lincoln and Garfield, Beecher, Talmage, and John B. Gough. Reader, it is of more real benefit to you to sit at the feet of these great orators and study elocution than to win millions of wealth. Learn to speak distinctly, and give the sense and the understanding, and you will find it an easy matter to climb up the ladder of fame. Did it pay Demosthenes to put pebbles in his mouth and talk until he got rid of the impediment in his speech? Ask the hundreds of millions who for thousands of years have spoken of him as the orator of the ages. The

boy who can talk plainly with stones in his mouth, can make himself heard above the rage of ocean wave. In the art of elocution is found the secret of success in almost every sphere of life. Christ knew how to use his tongue, therefore the multitude said of Him, "Never man spake as this man." The reason the common people heard Him so gladly was because He knew how to use His voice.

But we must introduce you to some of John Crow's experiences among the orators. Whilst he was attending Wittenberg College, at Springfield, Ohio, the city was favored by speeches from some of the

best orators in the world. One of the most eloquent women to whom he ever listened was Olive Logan. I do not think that anything in the art of oratory ever surpassed her description of the "Beautiful Girl." She painted the word pictures with such wonderful fascination that the effect was overwhelming. The first picture was a representation of this beautiful girl as she came from the hand of God, an innocent babe. Then she followed her through her childhood and girlhood, in the home, in the school, in society. With withering scorn she showed how the moral leper first blighted her beauty, by the pressure of his im-

pure lips on her fair cheek. With delicate touches she followed her as she went down, down, down, into the depths of degradation and despair. At last we find her dying in the filth and the slime of the street. The last words that escaped her lips were, "Beauty has been my curse, beauty has been my curse."

By this time the audience was worked up to the highest pitch. Olive Logan stood there pressing her kerchief to her eyes. Amidst the deathly silence that followed, it seemed as if the vast crowd held its breath. Then there was a contagion of tears and sobs and wild fluttering of handkerchiefs every-

where. The roar of applause that followed was like the thunder that follows the sheeted lightning. That was the evening on which Olive Logan crowned herself the queen of eloquence.

John Crow heard Henry Ward Beecher lecture twice. His addresses were on "Manhood and Money," and "Compulsory Education." On the first evening John went early in order that he might get a good seat. The lecture was to begin at 8 o'clock, P. M. The audience was large and expecting a great and thrilling oratorical feast. It was in Tike's Opera House, in Cincinnati. This city has for fifty years held

Henry Ward Beecher in high esteem, for it was here that he studied theology under his father, who was a great, grand man. In fact I think he was the father of more brains than any man the world has yet produced. His noble boy, Henry Ward, inherited the gift of oratory from his father. But we must return to the evening when John Crow first heard the lecture on "Manhood and Money," by Beecher. When the time arrived for the lecture to begin, the great crowd awaited with eager eyes the appearance of the orator. But they were doomed to disappointment. At eight o'clock the announcement was

made that they would have to wait a little while as the speaker had not arrived yet. At nine o'clock the message was given out that Beecher was coming as fast as he possibly could, and would soon be there. It was almost ten o'clock and yet no Beecher. Such a weary, worried, worn-out multitude John Crow had never seen before. Just as the clock was striking ten, Mr. Beecher came prancing on the stage and thus began, "If ever there was a day when a long freight train was standing in the way of a passenger train, it was to-day. If ever trains missed their connection, it was to-day. If ever a switch was out of place, it

was to-day. If ever a train and a speaker were behind time, it was to-day."

His comical way of saying these words cannot be put into print. But he had his audience roaring in about five minutes. They soon forgot that they had been waiting three hours. It is doubtful whether Mr. Beecher ever had his equal as an orator. The impression he made was certainly not so much in what he said, as in the *way* he said it.

During the Rebellion the English government favored the Southern Confederacy. It was the marvelous eloquence of Henry Ward Beecher that turned the tide of

public opinion in Great Britain in favor of the North. This government never paid him the debt it owed him. His thunderous blows against slavery were like bolts hurled from the throne of God.

But the ideal orator that John Crow would again and again pay a dollar for the privilege of hearing was John B. Gough. He was the one matchless man in mimicry. Inside of five minutes he could make his audience laugh and cry.

Here are a few of the gems from Gough's lecture on "Circumstances," with which John Crow was delighted. "The poorest man in all the world is he who has nothing

but money. Never condemn any one until you know all the circumstances which govern his conduct."

Out of the depths of delirium tremens, Gough had come up into a sober life. His graphic portrayal of the sorrows and heartaches of the drunkard's home was enough to make the demons of despair wail with woe. He said, "If the sobering off would come first, and the drunk would come afterwards, there would be very few drunkards."

That was a glorious day for the cause of total abstinence when the deacon tapped John B Gough on the shoulder and said, "Please sir, won't you sign the pledge?" It

gave to the world the most eloquent champion that the temperance cause has ever had.

Another orator of wonderful power, to whom John Crow listened with intense interest, was Talmage, the great preacher. At Lakeside camp ground, John heard this inimitable orator twice. The striking originality of what he says amply atones for the harsh, grating tones of his voice. And yet that voice attracts you at once. It has wonderful penetrating power. John was amused when a number of persons who came after the sermon had begun were crowding forward, and Talmage yelled, "Stay back! stay

back ! I'll make you hear." They were convinced that he could be heard a mile away. He began his sermon with these words, "Moses was dead ! A beautiful tradition says that God kissed him ; and in kissing the dying lawgiver He drew his breath from him."

But it is especially through the printing press that Talmage reaches millions where his voice reaches thousands.

CHAPTER VIII.

JOHN CROW'S EXPERIENCES.

Into the lives of all men there come experiences that seem strangely startling. When John Crow was seventeen years old, he witnessed the sudden death of a near neighbor. John and his father, and a Mr. Stouffer, were hauling saw-logs for the building of a church. It was on a rainy morning. Twice, as the log was rolled up, the skid slipped off the wheel. A chain, with a saple at the end of it, was wrapped around the center of the log. The staple was driven into the log, and two

horses hitched to the other end of the chain. John's father was driving the horses. Mr. Stouffer took an axe and followed up the log, intending to put the edge of the ax in the skid to keep the log from rolling back. Just as the log was almost on the wagon, the staple at the end of the chain flew out, and the log came back with terrific force, crushing in the breast of Mr. Stouffer. He lived only about ten minutes. Such a sudden, shocking death, cannot be forgotten soon. It made a lasting impression on the mind of John Crow. He resolved to consecrate himself anew to God. He saw, as he had never seen before, the neces-

sity of being ready for death at all times. We may be ushered into eternity without a moment's notice. But to the true Christian it matters but little in what form the end comes. Death only opens the gates to greater gladness. Why should a true Christian shrink from getting free from care and sorrow and pain? What wonderful visions of beauty and joy and glory open up to us as we read the last chapters of the Bible!

But from the very moment of our conversion, should begin this life of rejoicing. God teaches us that we are to rejoice evermore. Let us keep in mind continually the consol-

ing words of the twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters. My cup runneth over." The most convincing proof of the superiority of the Christian religion is, that it makes people happy; happy in body, and mind, and soul.

During the last year that John Crow attended Wittenberg College, one of his classmates passed over into the heavenly land. Slowly but surely did the devouring disease, consumption, do its deadly work. He was the son of the man whose sudden death I have just described.

Great was the contrast between the two deaths. Several months before young Mr. Stouffer passed away he requested John Crow to hold a prayer-meeting at his house. The scene was truly a touching one. Around the bedside of the pale, wasted form, were gathered the near neighbors and school-mates of the sick man. Hymn after hymn ascended heavenward. Prayer after prayer went to the throne of God. Consoling passages of scripture were read. Comforting words were spoken to cheer the afflicted. Brother Stouffer also told of his brilliant hope of Heaven. He said, "In such an hour as this, let the body go. The

body is nothing, but the soul is everything." It was a scene in which it seemed as if the very angels of God were hovering in the room. He had intended devoting his life to the ministry. He did not live to preach, but he left three thousand dollars to be used to educate others for the ministry. This money being used for so noble a purpose, it can be truly said of him, "He being dead, yet speaketh." Far away in the future can we see his money sending men into the ministry. The interest of this amount may in the next hundred years help to educate a score of talented young men to preach. The good deeds that we

do start streams of gladness on the parched deserts of earth, that will empty their blessings in the ocean of eternity. We are to sow the seed; God will take care of the harvest.

John Crow's father paid the bills of his college course for the first two years. Then he said, "Now then, John, if you want any more of an education, you must get your money from some other source." The quick reply came, "All right, I'll teach school and earn my own way through."

The necessary certificate was obtained. He applied for a school near his own home. One of the directors said to him, "I always am in

favor of encouraging home talent. You shall have the school."

It may have seemed but a little thing for the man to say, but it shone like a mountain of gold in the noon-day sun, in the eyes of John. When Christ said, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country," He meant it as a most scathing rebuke upon the hypocritical Pharisees who rejected Him. When a man does his duty in his native neighborhood, he deserves just as much encouragement as he does away from home. Why should a man be put to the expense of going away hundreds of miles to get a start in life? The good common

sense of a Christian community ought to encourage home talent in business, and teaching, and preaching.

John Crow had started in his life career with the earnest determination to make a success out of anything he undertook to do. If he could not climb over the mountains of difficulty in the way, he would tunnel through the mountains. During his second year of teaching his wages were increased to fifty-three dollars a month. But he saw that he could make money much faster by taking an agency for a sewing machine. Into this business he plunged with a great deal of enthu-

siasm, during the summer vacation. His profits amounted to about two hundred dollars in two months. In this work he did not forget to plead with God for His blessing. As he pushed his work he would say, "Now Lord, if thou wilt help me to be successful, I will spend this money to the glory of thy name." One of the best business bargains a man can make is something similar to that which Jacob made when "he vowed a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, then shall the Lord be my God: and of all that thou shalt give me

I will surely give the tenth unto thee." As God was with Jacob even to the end of life, so is He ever ready to help those who put their trust in Him. In the experience of John Crow this truth was verified. For five years of his college course he succeeded each summer vacation in earning enough money to support him at school the rest of the year. Similar pluck and energy will bring swift success to many another young man. There must be a determination never to sit down with a tear or a frown on the face. Victory comes to those who laugh at the storms they meet.

CHAPTER IX.

JOHN CROW AND THE CHILDREN.

Who has not been tickled by the funny sayings of a child? The unconscious wit of the little toddlers brings many a laugh to the care-worn face. Their cute sayings have brightened many a page. And yet how difficult it is to put into print the full force of their cuteness. The magic charm found in the laugh of a child cannot be put into a book. The mischief of Topsy had to be seen and heard to be fully realized.

Shortly after John Crow had entered the ministry he called on a

lawyer with whom he was intimately acquainted. They were eagerly talking about political matters, when a four year old nephew of the lawyer came up behind them. Not wishing to make a break in their talk, they paid no attention to the little fellow. Suddenly he turned on his heel, and ran to the other side of the house, and said, "Aunty, I'll bet you God will punish that preacher, for he never said howdy doo to me." Of course the joke on Mr. Crow was too good to keep. But it was a lesson on sociability that he never forgot. He drew the conclusion that it was a dreadful mistake to ignore the children under any circumstanc-

es. After that he proved by his actions what he felt in his heart, a special friendliness for the children. Many a jolly time did he have romping with the little ones. Their striking sayings were a continual source of merry amusement to him.

Once at a wedding a little fellow turned a rich joke on Mr. Crow. After the ceremony had been performed, and the congratulations had been offered by the company, the boy said, "Mr. Crow, don't you wish it would have been you that's married to Aunty?" Like a storm that follows a dead calm, the applause shook the house. John told the boy to call at his room the next day and he would pay him for his wit.

In John Crow's efforts to do good among the children, he had all manner of funny experiences. One day he called on a family where he found a boy just chock full of talk. He said to him, "Now, sonny, if your mamma and papa would bring you to church would you be good?" "I guess I would if I had the time; but I haven't the time to be real good," was the boy's reply. Then the pastor said, "Well now, if your parents would have you baptized?" "Baptized! what is that?" said the boy, his eyes big with wonder. Then Mr. Crow had to explain to him that he would put his hand in a bowl of water, and sprinkle it on the boy's

head three times But the boy remembering how his mother did when she washed him, said, "And would you use any soap?"

It requires an immense amount of patience to train these little ones in the way that leads from earth to heaven. But then it pays to tell them how Jesus used to put his hands on the heads of little children and say, "Suffer them to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." When God plucks one of these blossoms out of a family, how vast the vacancy! How the heart aches as we read the tenderly touching story of the death of little Nell, written by Charles Dickens. And

yet what a grand truth he gives us in these words: "For every fragile flower, thus early cut down, an hundred virtues rise, in the shape of charity and love and mercy to walk this earth and bless it "

In John Crow's work as a pastor he was often called on to speak words of consolation to those who had said the last goodbye to their little ones. One of the most touching of such scenes that his eyes ever witnessed was that of a little girl who in her dying moments repeated the twenty-third Psalm. It seemed in reality that the Lord was her Shepherd, making her to lie down in green pastures, and leading her be-

side the still waters of life. One could almost see the soul roaming through the infinite meadows of heaven. We gaze at the beautiful stars, and they seem like the sparkling eyes of the little ones who have gone to the heavenly land. What a heart-breaking trial it is for loving parents to see the bodies of their children laid away in the grave! Mr. Crow once preached the funeral of a little boy whose heart-strings seemed fastened with links of steel to the parents. It was with difficulty that the mother was kept from throwing herself into the open grave of her boy. In the cellar of her home she preserved for years a foot-

print that the boy had made shortly before he died. But when God takes these little ones to Himself, let us no longer think of them as being in the dark grave. Let us rather think of them as having the capacity of soaring through the endless realms of light. When John Crow was a mere boy yet, his sister about four years old, was taken away to dwell with the angels. She was remarkably bright and had memorized a number of hymns. Often would she sit on her rocking chair and sing these words :

“ There is a happy land,

Far, far away,

Where the saints in glory stand,

Bright, bright as day.

Oh how they sweetly sing,
Worthy is our Savior King,
Loud let his praises ring,
Forever more.

Come to that happy land.

Come, come away.

Why will you doubting stand ;

Why still delay ?

There we shall happy be,

When from sin and sorrow free,

Lord we shall reign with Thee,

Reign evermore.

CHAPTER X.

SMILES AND TEARS.

Among the readers of books there are many different dispositions. Some love that only which is solid and solemn, whilst others are saying, "Give us something funny." Also the same person has different moods. Sometimes in the morning the mind is full of gloom, and before night comes all the clouds are swept away. It is said that "variety is the spice of life." So we find the life of John Crow made up of thorns and flowers, tears and smiles. In his

pastoral work one day he came across a boy who was exceedingly full of talk. Mr. Crow said to him, "Boy, what are you going to be when you grow to be a man?" The reply was, "Well, I had thought I would be a sailor, but I am afraid the ship might sink."

Then Mr. Crow, putting his hand on the boy's head, said, "You have a high, broad forehead, I believe you would make a good preacher."

The boy's reply was, "Oh pshaw! I would run out of wind."

There is considerable philosophy in this sample of juvenile wit. One of the essential things for a successful preacher is the blessing of good

lungs. Deep breathing in the sunshine ought to be practised by everyone from childhood to old age. This is the way to expand the lungs, and purify the blood. It is the preacher with a strong body who finds his work a continual delight. In the qualifications given in the Bible for the selection of priests, their bodies were to be without blemish.

In the experience of almost every minister there come times when his self-command is put to the severest test. A very exciting scene took place at a Christmas entertainment in the church where John Crow was pastor. Great and grand prepara-

tions had been made. A large ever-green tree had been placed in the church. Beautiful decorations graced the tree. Costly presents were hung upon it in abundance. Artificial birds were swinging in the branches. Elephants and other animals that artistic hands had made were placed on a table. Reports of these elaborate decorations had gone far and wide. The sleigh riding was exceedingly good. An immense congregation gathered to witness the exercises. The church was crowded to its utmost capacity, and yet there were at least one hundred people outside in the cold determined to get in. Those near the door

were pressing up towards the tree. Mr. Crow begged of them to keep back. Suddenly there was a crash that sounded like the crack of a pistol. Then there was a terrible rush for doors and windows. The noise was bewildering. Chaos reigned supreme. Children were crying, women were screaming with terror. It was feared that the burning lamps and the red hot stoves would be upset. Scores of the most frightened ones jumped out of the windows. About one hundred lights were knocked out. Amidst the wild scene of confusion some one started the report that Mr Crow had been shot. This proved to be untrue.

He was doing all in his power to get the people quiet. With the serious, was mixed up the ludicrous. One old lady was wringing her hands in awful agony and screaming, "The devil is here, the devil is here."

At length the excitement ended. No one was seriously hurt. It was ascertained that the cause of the crash was a broken support beneath the floor, which resulted in a sinking of about six inches. If the floor had gone to the bottom of the basement, a distance of about ten feet, the consequences would have been dreadful to contemplate. The probabilities are that a score of persons would have met with a horrible death. It

seemed as if the strong hand of God kept the floor from going down any further. When the crash came, Mr. Crow gave himself fully into God's care. He realized that whether his lot was life or death, all was well with his soul. If we could lift the veil that hides eternity from our view, how differently most of us would live. How little does it matter as to whether we are rich or poor, if only we live to be good and to do good. Let us each day bring a smile into the face of some one. If we only knew the deep hunger of the heart for sympathy, for kindness, how thickly would we scatter the seeds of kindness across the path-

way of others. At a great Sunday-school convention John Crow heard the sweet singer, Philip Philips, sing the touching song called, "Scattering Seeds of Kindness." It was a scene that could not well be forgotten. Those who have heard Philips sing, know the melting tenderness of his voice. Tongue cannot tell, pen cannot describe the pathos that he wove into the following words:

"If we knew the baby fingers,

Pressed against the window pane,

Would be cold and stiff to-morrow,

Never trouble us again ;

Would the bright eyes of our darling,

Catch the frown upon our brow ?

Would the print of rosy fingers,

Vex us then as they do now ?

Ah those little ice cold fingers,
How they point our memories back,
To the hasty words and actions,
Strewn along our backward track.
How those little hands remind us,
As in snowy grace they lie,
Not to scatter thorns, but roses,
For our reaping bye and bye."

When Mr. Philips had finished the singing of these pathetic words, there were very few dry eyes in that audience of two thousand people. They realized that they dare not wait with their deeds of kindness until the loved one had gone beyond the reach of human sympathy. It was a bitter thought for the rich man in hell to remember that on

earth the dogs had much more sympathy for Lazarus than he had. We are taught in the Bible that the evidence of pure and undefiled religion is to be found in the visits of comfort given to the fatherless and the widow. It is better to wipe away the tears of trouble than to have the name of being a selfish millionaire.

Mr. Crow in many different ways proved his sympathy for the sick. For six weeks before his brother David died, he gave his gratuitous service in taking care of him. It was an experience that was sad, and yet joyous; tearful, and yet full of triumph. It was a marvelous proof of the power of the Christian relig-

ion to conquer the king of terrors. For months the fires of consumption burned away his vitality. Day by day he waited for the coming of the chariot. One evening at twilight he said, "John, sing something." In tender tones these words were wafted on the balmy breeze:

"I'll wait till Jesus comes,
I'll wait till Jesus comes,
I'll wait till Jesus comes,
And He will take me home."

Then David with a happy smile shining on his face said, "I wish He would come now."

Soon the pearly gates swung open and he saw the angels in white raiment. He said, "If this is pass-

ing away then it is pleasant to die. Oh how bright it is all around me ! I never saw it this light before."

Then he calmly gave good-bye to those around his bedside, speaking words of cheer to all. To his wife he said, "Fannie, if in the providence of God you should erect a tombstone for me, please have inscribed on it this epitaph: 'Christ is all, and in all.' " Looking with the deepest tenderness at his brother, he said, "John, you have been very kind to take care of me for the last six weeks. I do not see how we could have managed to get along without you. May God bless you for all your kindness to me."

As we listen to such words coming from one who is passing through the portals that separate this world from the next, it surely seems right to say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" We begin to realize what Paul meant when he said, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all those also that love his appearing."

CHAPTER XI.

JOHN CROW, AND THE NEWSPAPERS

Up to the third year of John Crow's public ministry, he wrote very few words for the newspapers. Then there came a day when he received a new birth of power for the Press. It was at the meeting of the Wittenberg Synod. For several years previous, the question of starting a wide-awake, progressive, and evangelistic church paper in Ohio had been agitated. Of course there was opposition. There always is to every good cause. But John Crow

was one of the fellows who just enjoyed a fight when he knew he was on the side of right, and was victorious. Paul, at the end of his successful career, says, "I have fought a good fight." So, when the church paper question came to a climax at the Synod, Mr. Crow arose and waiting until the silence became oppressive, said, "In the language of Patrick Henry, 'We must fight, I repeat it, sir, we must fight.' And the way I propose to fight this opposition is by pledging myself to secure twenty-five subscribers gratuitously." The fire of enthusiasm began to blaze. As soon as the applause subsided, voices were heard

all over the house subscribing stock, and pledges given to secure subscribers. The paper was called "The Evangelist." From its very birth it was an earnest advocate of the rapid extension of God's kingdom through evangelistic services. In a few months Mr. Crow had secured one hundred subscribers. He did this whilst holding Revival services in four different churches. He realized that anyone who starts in the Christian life without fortifying that life with a Christian newspaper is at a fearful disadvantage. In fact such a paper should have a place in every family. If this is not done, the devil is sure to do his work with a pernicious paper.

And what does it avail to become Christians and then have the good seed choked out by the tares and thorns and deadly upas trees of bad literature? I have heard of a mother eagle that left her nest in the mountains in search of food for her little ones. For many weary miles she flew. At length seeing something moving in the prairie grass below, she swooped down upon it and grasped it in her talons. It was a serpent. As she soared away to her home in the mountains it thrust its poisonous fangs into her breast. Soon the poison took effect. She reached her nest only to die. But the serpent was still alive. Then

with fiendish delight it thrust its deadly fangs into the very vitals of the four little eaglets. Dead mother, dead children. Oh, it seemed so cruel that some blind fate had permitted her to make the deadly mistake of carrying a serpent instead of a fish. But I have seen a still more cruel thing done. It was when a human mother welcomed into her home the serpent of bad literature. When John Crow was teaching school, one of his scholars was a confirmed reader of blood and thunder stories. He read of heroes who made their money easily and rapidly by robbery. And the marvelous thing about it was, these heroes

would always go scot free. One evening as the shadows were gathering, he sent a bullet crashing through the body of a wealthy neighbor. But unlike the heroes of whom he had read, his doom was to go to the penitentiary at Columbus.

It was Mr. Crow's custom for a number of years to talk to the people on Sunday at church on religious reading. He would also show the evil effects of pernicious papers. Many would subscribe for "The Evangelist" on the Sabbath. The better the day the better the deed. But his talk on Sunday would especially prepare the way for his work during the week in that community.

He had all manner of funny experiences in this work. One day while trudging over the Alleghany mountains he met a man who remarked, "Well, from what you told us last Sunday, I must either take your paper or be hung." And he subscribed at once.

At another time he had traveled on the railroad all night. As the train came into Canton, Ohio, the dawn was coming. As the passengers were waking up, the newsboy tried hard to sell his papers. As he approached a seedy old gentleman, the boy said, "Now, please, Mr , won't you buy a paper ?" The man rubbing his eyes, said, "Wall, if there is

anything miraculous in it, I'll buy." This man was a type of a large class of people. The craving for the sensational has almost destroyed a desire for religious reading. They want to gorge themselves on the "miraculous" in literature. But a better day is coming. We are in the very dawn of a new era in literature. Through the efforts of John Crow, and thousands of others, the people are being persuaded to read that which is religious. Millions upon millions read Talmage's sermons. What a vast multitude have read the religious novels, "Pilgrim's Progress," and "Uncle Tom's Cabin?" It is reported, three million copies of

Rev. Dr. Sheldon's book, "In His Steps," have been sold. The essential thing to make a Christian book sell well is, to put religion in the form of a fascinating story. Well, that was the style in which Jesus preached. It is said of him, "Without a parable He spake not unto them." Why not learn a lesson from Him of whom it is said, "Never man spake as this man."

One day while John Crow was working in the office of "The Evangelist," a big batch of a manuscript came in. He said to the editor, "What shall we do with this?" The reply given was, "Salt it down, sir, salt it down, sir." When the day

comes that all the dry stuff sent to Christian newspapers shall be salted down, it will be an easy matter to get subscribers. The people are under no obligation to tolerate twaddle. They want the book and the paper that have meat in them. A stupid style of literature might as well be strangled in its very birth, for the people won't waste their time in reading it. As John Crow wrote for the papers, he did his utmost to cultivate a lively style.

Sometimes the newsboys in their eager anxiety to sell their papers imposed on Mr. Crow's good nature. Once, a little black-eyed boy, with mischief protruding from every fea-

ture of his face, said, "Please now Mr., won't you buy the last paper I've got? Here you will find a full account of the great rail road accident. It tells how many were wounded. It tells how many were killed. It tells how they died the most horrible deaths by being burned alive. It took place between Dayton and Cincinnati. Nothing like it has ever happened in the Miami Valley." After such a flow of eloquence John Crow quickly pulled out his nickel and handed it to the boy. He searched that paper from top to bottom, from right to left for the great R. R. accident. Again and again he turned the paper from side to side,

but not one word did he find of any accident. Then with righteous indignation he hunted for the boy. Handing the paper to the boy he said, "I wish you would find for me that report of the big rail road smash up. I can't find one single word about it." "O, the way that was," said the wicked boy, "a lot of people were standing under a rail road bridge, and the train did run over them, but it did not kill any of them." Then Mr. Crow said, "Boy, you may think you have done something smart, but I have a notion to tan your hide for lying to me." But the boy had the nickel, and that was all he cared for.

The day is rapidly coming when the Christian newspaper shall take the place of the satanically secular. Down in the human heart there is a deep craving for something better and more pure than that upon which the people have been feeding. The great ambition of John Crow's heart and brain was to provide a paper so full of life and spiritual honey that the people would eagerly grasp for it. The day is near at hand when Christian capitalists will put their millions into religious newspapers. A Christian literature is closely connected with the saving of souls. It sometimes reaches the heart when the sermon fails. It was so with

John Crow. When he was a mere boy yet, one day he read in "The Observer" an article, entitled "God's love for the world." So deep were the impressions made that in a flow of tears he consecrated himself fully to God. After he had entered the ministry he realized more than ever the importance of having a Christian paper in every home. He succeeded in persuading many churches to report the number of Christian papers taken by the members. He found in looking over such statistics, that where the number of religious papers taken was small, there the activity of the church was at a low ebb. Great Christian zeal and work prevailed

where a church paper found a place in every home. And one of the strongest reasons why Christian people are more active in the United States than any where else is on account of the marvelous freedom of the religious press. Need we wonder, then, that John Crow ardently took hold of this mighty lever to turn the kingdoms of this world into the Kingdom of Christ? And it will not be long until the Christian paper shall have completely crowded out the pernicious. God speed the day! As a canvasser for religious papers Mr. Crow was successful. In a few years he sent in thousands of subscribers to "The Evangelist,"

mentioned in the first part of this chapter. No wonder that the publisher of this paper wrote to him, "Oh for a thousand John Crow's to send us subscribers!"

CHAPTER XII.

MR. CROW AS A REVIVALIST.

When God made this world He said, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." It is a very ignorant man who thinks this Scripture applies only to secular affairs. Look over the past history of the church and you can readily see that it has had its winter as well as its summer. The night has come, then also the day. The gloom and despair of the disciples during the death of Christ, was followed by the

rejoicing of the day of Pentecost. The rapture of that Revival has been echoing on down the ages to this day. And when the last sinner on earth shall be converted, then that rejoicing will still go on through all eternity. Do not the Scriptures say, "There shall be more joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth," etc? When John Crow's second birth took place he was cradled in a Revival. During his college course he had an active experience as a worker in revivals. In his first pastorate, lasting three years, the membership of this Church was more than doubled by this Scriptural system.

But it was in the autumn of 1877 that he decided to consecrate himself fully to evangelistic work. In that year he seemed to become a new man. His heart was all aglow with a mighty enthusiasm for God. An electric swiftness and vigor seemed to take possession of his feet. He trod the earth with the swing of a king. His rising sun grew big with promise of the winning of souls for God. He felt as if that was all he cared to live for. At the meeting of the Wittenberg Synod that year in Ohio, he was much encouraged in his work by the warm hand of sympathy from his brethren. What cheered him most of all, was a strong speech

made by his theological teacher Dr. Sprecher, in favor of the work. The words he uttered are worthy of being carved in pure gold. One sentence of that utterance burned itself into the very soul of John Crow. These are the words, "I have often thought, if it were not for the responsibility of providing for the temporal wants of my family, I would like to spend all of my time in going through this world and telling every man and woman and child I met, how to live for God." As the good old man uttered this speech with trembling voice, and the tears running down his face, the effect was marvelous. Then he warmly grasp-

ed the hand of Mr. Crow and said, "God bless you in your work " With these words ringing in his soul the young evangelist went forth with joy on his mission of mercy.

In the town of Mt. Vernon for two months he went from house to house stirring up the people until salvation was the all-absorbing theme. His second meeting was started in the village of St. Louisville. Here he spent one month. From the very beginning the people came out in immense crowds. In their homes, and in the shops and stores, salvation was almost the only thing that was talked about. Far away into the night could be heard the echo of Christian

song and prayer coming from happy homes. In a number of cases the entire family united with the church. It seemed as if all hindrances had been removed. They all felt the force of the Scripture, which says, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." As a partial result of this meeting he received forty-nine persons into church fellowship. Others were almost persuaded, but failed to make the final decision. There was one of this class whose final fate stirred up the soul of Mr. Crow to its deepest depths. She was a teacher in the village school. She was laboring under the dreadful delusion

that if God wanted to save her soul, it was not necessary that she should give the consent of her will. Night after night would she come to the meetings. As a rule she was the last one to leave the house. Appeal upon appeal was made both publicly and privately by Mr. Crow. It seemed as if it could not be that she should linger any longer in the valley of indecision. But the meetings closed and she gave no sign of being saved. Years passed away. Consumption began doing its deadly work on her vital forces. The dying hour was drawing near. Her mother noticed a look of awful anguish on her face. Tenderly she said,

"What is it you want, Florence?"

"Oh, Mother," was the reply, "I want salvation, but I feel that it is too late to get it. You taught me years ago that if God wanted to save my soul He would save me against my will. I have waited too long. Now my will is too weak to do anything. Oh how I would like to get to heaven, but I can't find the way. Your wrong doctrine is to blame for my eternal torment." The last words that rang through the house from the lips of the dying girl were these: "Mother, I want salvation but it is too late." The neighbors came in and found her with a wild stare of horror on her face. The

death struggle ended with her hands clenched in the tangled masses of her heavy hair.

Oh my dear reader if your soul is still unsaved, give yourself at once to Christ. Will you be one of the number of whom it shall be said at last,

“Too late, too late, shall be the cry,
Jesus of Nazareth has passed by.”

In the meetings held by Mr. Crow the manifestations of the Spirit's power were overwhelming. There were times when the sobs of deep conviction could be heard all over the house. When the soul struggles out of the miry clay into the sweet sunlight of God's love the change is

wonderful. Nothing else would rejoice the soul of John Crow more than to see a saloon keeper come to Christ. He would make the fact especially emphatic, that Jesus was able to save unto the uttermost. Thus we find among the converts of his meetings the most abandoned drunkards and gamblers and libertines. Did not Christ say to one of the worst prostitutes, "Go, sin no more!" For the encouragement of such, often would Mr. Crow sing,

"I am the lowest of those that love Him,

I am weakest of those who pray,

But then the dear Savior has bidden,

And He will not say me nay.

I know I am weak and sinful,
It comes to me more and more,
But then the dear Savior has bidden,
And I knock at the open door."

For several years John Crow lived with a converted saloon keeper. He was one of the most active Christian workers in that community. When the new church was built the most liberal giver was this man. He used to tell his experience in these words: "I have been a wonderfully active agent for the devil, and now I want to be a thousand times more active in the cause of Christ I must make up for lost time." If our faith were only strong enough, all the saloon keepers on the earth could be con-

verted, if Christians would work hard enough for it. But I firmly believe we have entered upon a Revival that will usher into God's kingdom millions upon millions of souls. The glad day is coming soon when every brothel and saloon and gambling den shall be turned into a place of prayer. So strong was the faith of John Crow that God is going to do this, that he is requesting on every suitable occasion the sincere prayers of Christians for the immediate conversion of a brewer who is the owner of two hundred saloons. Oh what showers of blessing will come to the Miami Valley when those two hundred holes of hell shall be turned into happy

homes! God speed the day. The author of "John Crow" is also preparing material for a book on personal purity, which he intends calling "Albert Sand." Most of the thrilling scenes take place in the Miami Valley. When once the earth is rid of the saloon and the brothel, there will come a time of prosperous peace such as we have never dreamed of. But the mightiest agency for the ushering in of that glad day, shall be revivals. The valley of dry bones shall soon be stirring with life. The sky is big with promise of better things yet to be. Nations are to be born in a day. There is to be a new heaven and a new earth.

We hope the life of "John Crow" has done something to bring this about. That life is opening out into everwidening fields of gladness and usefulness. May God use him at least fifty years yet in doing good.

And now, as I dedicate this book to all my true friends, let its readers take this as a motto: "I must do all the good I can on earth; that is all I am here for." I want to meet all of my readers in a better world.

J. W. RYDER.



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